



Tree Removal Permits

Mature trees contribute to the quality of life in Mill Creek by lending an aesthetically pleasing image to the City's landscape, helping reduce greenhouse gases and providing wildlife habitat. In addition, trees help prevent erosion on steep slopes and stream banks. As such, the City of Mill Creek Comprehensive Plan promotes the preservation of mature trees and the Development Code has restrictions on removing trees. Additionally, many developments within the City have tree preservation plans identifying specific trees that must be preserved and/or property buffers where trees are to be retained.

Even though trees add to the quality of life, sometimes a particular tree will become diseased or hazardous and the property owner may determine that the tree should be removed. In such cases, all trees that are six inches or larger in diameter measured at the height of four and one-half feet require a tree removal permit prior to removal.

In considering a tree removal request, the City may require the property owner to provide an arborist report to determine the health of the tree. In addition, all trees in critical area buffers, roadway buffers, or property buffers require a permit regardless of size.

Application

In order for a tree to be removed from a developed lot in Mill Creek, a tree removal permit is required prior to removal. Please fill out a Tree Removal Permit application and submit it to the City. There is no charge for a tree removal permit.

Process

The Inspector will:

1. Determine if the tree is on the tree preservation list.
2. Determine if the tree is in a no cutting buffer, wetland buffer, or Native Growth Protection area.
3. Review the tree preservation requirements from the conditions of the approved plat development.
4. Visit the site and inspect the tree.
5. Determine if an arborist's report will be required.
6. Advise for either approval or denial of the permit.

Homeowners' Association Approval

Some homeowners' associations have additional regulations regarding tree removal. It is the responsibility of the property owner to contact the homeowners' association and get permission to remove trees, if applicable.

Appeals

If your permit is denied for any reason, you may appeal the decision to:

Director of Community Development
City of Mill Creek
15728 Main Street
Mill Creek, Washington 98012

Hiring a Tree Removal Company

The following information is provided on the Department of Labor and Industries website and contains valuable information to keep in mind when you are considering hiring a tree service to either remove or prune your trees.

Make sure you:

- **Plan your project** -- If you know what you want done and can clearly explain it, you're less likely to misunderstand instructions or encounter cost overruns.
- **Interview contractors** -- Interview several qualified registered contractors and solicit written bids. Evaluate all aspects of the bids, including the scope of work, warranties, references, time frames and price.
- **Check that the contractor is registered** -- Verify that the contractor registration number is current with L&I. Look for the contractor registration number in advertisements for contractors. The law requires this number to be included in all advertisements, including business cards and the Yellow Pages.
- **Verify workers' comp coverage** -- If your contractor has workers, ensure they have an up-to-date workers' comp account. Contractors using workers on the jobsite must have a workers' comp (industrial insurance) account and should be paid up-to-date. Contractors not using workers (owner-contractors) are not required to open workers' comp accounts.
- **Check the contractor using other resources.**
 - Office of the Attorney General:**
www.atg.wa.gov/SafeguardingConsumers/
TDD users call 1-800-833-6384
Consumer Resource Center: 1-800-551-4636
 - Better Business Bureau**
www.bbb.org
206-431-2222 (western Washington)
- **Ask for references and check them** -- If possible, view the work, interview the homeowner and visit a site with work in progress.
- **Get a disclosure statement** -- Make sure you receive the legally required Notice to Customer (disclosure statement) before work begins.

Check for warning signs of a scam.

- *Provides a credential or reference that can't be verified.*
- *Offers a special price only if you sign today, or use other high-pressure sales techniques.*
- *Only accepts cash, requires large deposits or the entire costs up front, or asks you to make the payment in their name.*
- *Does not provide a written contract or complete bid.*
- *Asks you to get the building permit. In most instances, if you have hired a contractor, the contractor is required to take out the permits. Permits are your protection and help ensure that work will meet local building codes.*
- *Offers exceptionally long warranties.*
- *Wants to do most or all the work on weekends and after hours.*
- *Gives you an offer that sounds "too good to be true."*

Please visit the Department of Labor and Industries website for more information and a Step by Step Guide to Hiring

Smart. <http://www.lni.wa.gov/TradesLicensing/Contractors/HireCon/Checklist/before1.asp>

Pruning Trees

A tree permit is not required for pruning trees; however, proper pruning is essential. Incorrect pruning can ultimately impact the health and safety of the tree. Following are several good links for information on the proper methods and timing for pruning:

Tree Pruning in Puget Sound:

http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/docs/EnglishonlyTreePruning%20Guide12_05.pdf

How to Prune Coniferous Evergreens:

<http://www.cals.uidaho.edu/edComm/pdf/bul/bul0644.pdf>

National Tree Benefit Calculator:

<https://www.arborday.org/calculator>